

Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

About you

Organisation: British Heart Foundation Cymru

1. The Bill's general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Yes

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)

British Heart Foundation (BHF) Cymru welcomes the 'four purposes' of the Bill which outline the principles of the new curriculum. We particularly welcome the fourth purpose, which seeks to ensure that the education system supports the development of 'healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society'.

It is evident that this principle of the curriculum seeks to ensure all pupils in Wales are supported to lead healthy lives, both mentally and physically. The Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) expands on this fourth purpose, with attention paid not only to the learner's wellbeing but also to protect and improve others health too. CPR and life saving skills are an essential part of fulfilling this principle, by ensuring that current and future generations feel comfortable and confident in recognising and responding to life-threatening emergencies.

Although the general principles of the Bill have allowed room for the inclusion of first aid and life saving skills in the curriculum, BHF Cymru wants to stress the need for a more pronounced commitment to universal teaching of these skills in Welsh schools to end the postcode lottery with regards to which young people have access to this opportunity.

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

BHF Cymru agrees that there should be legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve, particularly with regards to fulfilling the fourth purpose and establishing the Health and Wellbeing AoLE.

To some extent, the importance of teaching children CPR and life saving skills in Wales has been acknowledged and we welcome the recent changes to include reference to life saving skills within supporting documents of the Curriculum and Assessment Bill. This includes reference being made in the progression steps for the first learning statement in the Health and Wellbeing AoLE on Developing Physical Health and Wellbeing has Lifelong Benefits, and more specifically, in the guidance for designing the curriculum as a specific consideration for this area.

We truly welcome this and are pleased to see that Welsh Government appear to understand the benefits of providing this training, but unfortunately these changes do not mean every school in Wales has to offer all their students education in life-saving skills to help prevent sudden deaths in the community. Consequently, young people who are enthusiastic to acquire this knowledge and learn skills such as CPR are not provided equal access to this training and may miss out on the opportunity.

We are therefore urging the committee to take this legislation further and amend the Bill to ensure universal provision of CPR and life saving skills in either of the following two ways:

- (a) The Health and Wellbeing AoLE could include the word 'must' when referring to teaching of first aid and life saving skills.
- b) Life saving skills could be included as a cross-cutting theme for curriculum design, like sex and relationships education, to ensure universal delivery.

2. The Bill's implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Without providing universal teaching of CPR and life saving skills, some young people will have access to this opportunity and feel confident when reacting in emergencies while others may not have acquired training to be able to respond. As a result, a significant barrier remains to delivering what the Bill is trying to achieve with regards to ensuring the physical safety of current and future generations in Wales.

As the Bill currently stands, Welsh Government is failing to address the post code lottery that exists with regards to learning CPR and other life saving skills. Committing to universal provision ensures that all schools will give young people the opportunity to acquire this training, in an age-appropriate way, using whichever method teachers feel appropriate. Potential teaching methods are expanded on in question 6.

The international evidence for improving survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests through universal CPR training in schools is clear. In Denmark, mandatory teaching of CPR was introduced in schools in 2005, along with better access to public access defibrillators (PADs) and improved practices by ambulance services. Over the first decade of this century, bystander CPR rates there doubled, and survival rates tripled (1). Norway and Seattle in the US, where CPR lessons are mandatory in schools, have also seen improvements in survival rates. Together with comprehensive programmes around public awareness and plans similar to Wales's Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) Plan, as many as 1 in 4 people survive an OHCA in parts of Norway (2) and 1 in 5 in Seattle (3).

The World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed the 'Kids Save Lives' Statement in 2015 - a joint statement from the European Resuscitation Council (ERC), the European Patient Safety Foundation (EPSF), the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) and the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA). This WHO statement recommends that all young people aged 12 and over can learn CPR in schools (4).

Although we do not have access to data on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates in Wales, only one in 10 people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the UK (5) and in order to improve this, all evidence unequivocally points towards providing universal access to learning CPR through life saving skills teaching in schools in Wales.

(1) Wissenberg M, Lippert FK, Folke F, et al., 2013. Association of National Initiatives to Improve Cardiac Arrest Management with Rates of Bystander Intervention and Patient Survival After Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest. JAMA. 310(13), pp.1377-1384.
oi:10.1001/jama.2013.278483

(2) Lindner TW et al., 2011. Good outcome in every fourth resuscitation attempt is achievable – An Utstein template report from the Stavanger region. Resuscitation; 82, pp.1508-13.

(3) Perkins GD, Lockey AS, de Belder MA, et al., 2015. National initiatives to improve outcomes from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in England. Emergency Medical Journal, 33, pp.448-51.

(4) Böttiger BW, Van Aken H, 2015. Kids save lives – Training school children in cardiopulmonary resuscitation worldwide is now endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Resuscitation, 94(A5-7)

(5) BHF UK estimate – volumes and survival rates are only routinely published for England and Scotland

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

The barriers discussed above would be effectively addressed if the Bill demonstrated a clear, legislative commitment to the universal provision of teaching vital life saving skills.

3. Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Without committing to universal provision of teaching CPR and other life saving skills in the Curriculum for Wales, we risk Wales being left behind the rest of the UK as well as globally. Learning CPR has been included as a mandatory element of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PHSE) education in England and will come into effect in September

2020 (6), and every local authority in Scotland has now committed to teaching CPR in secondary schools (7).

The positive effects of mandatory teaching of CPR in secondary schools alongside a better implemented Chain of Survival have already been seen in Denmark, Norway and Seattle. By not following suit and delivering on an improved Chain of survival in Wales, including universal provision of CPR and life saving skills, we not only risk allowing a postcode lottery on educational policy in the UK but also on survival rates from OHCA's.

Although the 2017 OHCA Plan in Wales makes clear the need for optimising the chain of survival - (1) early recognition of a cardiac arrest and the call for help, (2) Early CPR, (3) Early defibrillation and (4) post-resuscitation care (8) - it simultaneously notes that not many feel confident in life saving skills to intervene in a situation involving cardiac arrest (9). The Plan proceeds to outline the settings in which CPR could be taught and that all students in schools, further and higher education should be given the opportunity to provide students with this training.

It is currently up to schools to decide whether this training is to be provided or not, meaning many young people across Wales are missing out on this opportunity.

(6) UK Government, 2019. Damian Hinds: Learning life-saving skills in school is crucial [Online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/damian-hinds-learning-life-saving-skills-in-school-is-crucial> [Accessed 13 August 2020].

(7) BBC, 2019. Every school pupil in Scotland to be taught CPR [Online]. Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-47826277> [Accessed 13 August 2020].

(8) Welsh Government, 2017. Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Plan [Online]. Available from: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/out-of-hospital-cardiac-arrest-plan.pdf>. [Accessed 13 August 2020], p.3

(9) Ibid, p.4

4. Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

BHF Cymru does not have an answer for this question.

5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

BHF Cymru does not have an answer for this question.

6. Other considerations

6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

CPR and life saving skills are not subjects but a vital set of skills:

Although we understand the reasoning behind the Donaldson Review and we recognise that the Curriculum for Wales is refraining from making subjects prescriptive, we would like to stress that teaching CPR and other life saving skills is not an independent subject and are instead a set of skills which evidence shows can improve the survival rates of OHCA's in Wales.

Unlike other subject learning, which should be flexible and up to schools and teachers to shape and develop, CPR is a life saving medical procedure which does not vary for the student or the recipient. The need for these skills exists in every community in Wales. Without providing opportunities for all students across Wales to learn these skills, we risk the possibility that someone is more likely to die from a cardiac arrest in one community compared to others. To improve the survival rates from OHCA's in Wales a universal

approach must be taken – although schools will retain flexibility in terms of how, when and who delivers this training.

To make the teaching of CPR and life saving skills as easy as possible, the BHF has worked with the Resuscitation Council to produce a 30-minute video (in English and Welsh) which explains and demonstrates CPR. These resources are available on the “Hwb” and accessible to all school staff, young people and their parents. The BHF has already equipped nearly 90% of Welsh secondary schools with CPR training kits and helped train more than 150,000 secondary school students since 2014. We look forward to continuing to contribute to this vital initiative, but this work would undoubtedly be more effective and lead to a substantive change in OHCA survival rates alongside a commitment from Welsh Government to universal provision.

Public perception:

On Restart a Heart Day in October 2018, our YouGov poll showed that nearly a third of adults would not attempt CPR (10). Many people quote reasons which are outdated such as worries over being sued, or that they might do more damage, when in reality a person whose heart has stopped will die without intervention. Many are not even aware of the difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest, which means that the ability to recognise a cardiac arrest is likely to be very poor. Bystander CPR is imperative and without it, our low survival rate from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests is likely to remain so.

Additionally, in 2019 the British Red Cross and BHF sought to find out how young people, parents and teachers felt about teaching life saving skills and first aid in schools:

Almost nine out of ten young people surveyed in Wales (89%) said learning how to save a life is one of the most important lessons they could learn.

Over nine out of ten children (94%) agreed that knowing first aid skills would make them feel more confident to help in an emergency.

79% of parents agreed that first aid and life saving skills should be on the curriculum in Wales - 97% of teachers surveyed agreed that first aid and life saving skills should be part of the Curriculum for Wales.

There is evidently an appetite for receiving education on life saving skills amongst parents and teachers, but most importantly, among our children and young people too.

‘Health in all policies’ approach:

The First Minister has also spoken about the importance of a 'health in all policies' approach. We believe that the Bill is a huge opportunity for Wales to build on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (2015) (Wales) Act, becoming part of a comprehensive and holistic governmental approach to ensure that students are able to develop and be equipped to become active and engaged citizens, and save lives that are unnecessarily lost due to OHCA's in the process.

Evidence session:

BHF Cymru would welcome the opportunity to take part in an evidence session for the Children, Young People and Education Committee, alongside the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Cymru. We have sought to explain the need for change, the international evidence to support a universal approach to teaching CPR in schools and how the Bill could be amended. However, there is much more to consider that was not able to be discussed in this consultation due to limited word count. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if this is a possibility.

Healthy Lifestyle:

A final consideration has been reserved for the Bill's commitment to enabling current and future generations to maintain a healthy lifestyle. BHF Cymru are pleased to see the inclusion of this, particularly education on balanced diet and physical activity.

Obesity and physical inactivity are associated with numerous risk factors for heart and circulatory diseases, including high blood pressure, raised cholesterol and type 2 diabetes (11).

Nonetheless, in the consultation on the white paper for the new curriculum (March 2019) and the curriculum for guidance (July 2019), BHF Cymru suggested the inclusion of educating pupils on the harm of smoking as part of the hazards and harms to physical health. This has not yet been addressed and BHF Cymru would like to emphasise the importance of this call, particularly as the prevalence of adults smoking in Wales has increased to 18% in the latest results from the national survey (12).

(10) Nearly a third of UK adults are not likely to attempt CPR, putting lives at risk [Online]. Available from: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2018/october/restart-a-heart-day-2018> [Accessed 13 August 2020].

(11) Atlas of Variation Sub Groups on behalf of NHS Wales, 2019. Cardiovascular Atlas of Variation [Online]. Available from:

<http://www.wcn.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1193/12959%20PHW%20Atlas%20report.pdf> [Accessed 13 August], p.23

(12) Welsh Government, 2020. National Survey for Wales 2019-2020. Available from: <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales-results-viewer> [Accessed 13 August 2020].

